Dreaming Justice:
Lessons from a Check, a Stranger, and the Work of Welcome

Recently, I had a vivid dream that can serve as a parable for our time and ministry: In it, I was helping an immigrant friend cash a $500 check. However, without a government ID or a verified address, the bank refused to assist. Standing together, undeterred, we looked for alternative solutions—because leaving him empty-handed was not an option.

This dream, full of yearning and frustration, shines a light on the deeper challenges—and the deeper calling—before us as progressive faith communities committed to immigration rights.

Turning Compassion into Action

The immigrant's check in my dream symbolizes more than just financial need; it also represents dignity hope, and the promise of belonging. Every day, newcomers in our communities encounter barriers that are just as real: required documentation they struggle to obtain, and access to services hindered by systems designed for exclusion rather than welcome. The check the bank refused to cash stands as a symbol for many closed doors—doors our faith urges us to help open.

Our Scriptures instruct us to welcome the stranger and to remember that our ancestors were once strangers too. The call for justice flows through our traditions like a river, compelling us toward the difficult and sacred work of making space, speaking out boldly, and standing shoulder to shoulder with those turned aside at the world's borders and gateways.

Creativity and Persistence in Faithful Advocacy

The dream did not end in defeat but in determination. We kept searching for ways to ensure everyone can access what is rightfully theirs—alternatives, partnerships, and creative solutions. This is the gift and necessity of our communal work: to hold onto hope, to imagine new ways of caring, and to challenge unfair systems that prevent our neighbors from living fully.

Many of our congregations are already leading this essential work: partnering with organizations, offering sanctuary, protesting against detention centers, and tirelessly advocating for policies that protect the vulnerable and reunite families. Every act, large or small, moves us closer to a beloved community where justice is practiced daily, not just an unreachable goal.

Renewed Courage for the Work Ahead

Friends, let this dream motivate us. When the challenge seems overwhelming and the paperwork endless, remember: our task is not to be lone heroes, but to persist together as a people rooted in hope and dedicated to love in action. May we—congregations, clergy, advocates—continue to seek new ways, never abandoning our siblings at life's thresholds. In doing so, we witness a faith that refuses to let bureaucracy overshadow human dignity or divine love.

Let compassion guide us, creativity sustain us, and community surround us in this ongoing journey toward radical welcome and enduring justice. May this dream inspire and strengthen your congregation's ministry—reminding us all that every dream, act of welcome, and partnership in justice moves us closer to the world God envisions.

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Florida Conference UCC | November 20, 2025